

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 NEA-10 /075 W

----- 024364

O 272233Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5137

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (SCHLESINGER, SECDEF)

SUB: VISIT OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER: TRANSCRIPT OF
MEETING WITH PRESS

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF A BRIEF QUESTION
AND ANSWER SESSION SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAD WITH TELE-
VISION AND RADIO REPORTERS AT THE HOTEL CHURCHILL JUST
PRIOR TO DEPARTING TODAY FOR HIS LUNCHEON AT CHEQUERS
WITH THE PRIME MINISTER:

BEGIN TEXT.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, GOOD MORNING, MAY I ASK YOU TO BEGIN
WITH WHETHER AS A RESULT OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
BRITISH DEFENSE SECRETARY, ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE
PRESENT BRITISH DEFENSE EFFORT AND WILL YOU BE RECOMM-
ENDING INCREASED AMERICAN ARMS ORDERS FROM BRITAIN TO
HELP BALANCE OUR DEFENSE BUDGET?

A. FIRST QUESTION. AS YOU KNOW, THE UNITED STATES
INDICATED ITS RESERVATIONS IN THE COURSE OF THE DEFENSE
REVIEW. THAT DECISION WAS ONE THAT WAS TAKEN BY THE
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BRITISH DEFENSE AUTHORITIES. WE HOPE THAT THE FORCE

STRUCTURE AND EXPENDITURE LEVELS INDICATED AT THE TIME OF THE DEFENSE REVIEW WILL INDEED BE IMPLEMENTED. WE ARE, OF COURSE, CONCERNED THAT ALL OF THE EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE CONTINUE TO DO THEIR SHARE. AN- IF BRITAIN SUCCEEDS IN FOLLOWING WHAT IT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO DOING IN THE COURSE OF THE DEFENSE REVIEW, I THINK IT WILL BE DOING ITS SHARE. OVER THE LONGER HAUL, ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE MUST BE PRE- PARED TO MATCH ANY FURTHER BUILDUPS ON THE PART OF THE WARSAW PACT. THERE IS THAT CONTINGENT ASPECT.

NOW WITH RESPECT TO THE DEFENSE PURCHASES, I BELIEVE THAT IT IS KNOWN THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN UNDUE DEGREE OF PROTECTIONISM IN DEFENSE INDUSTRIES WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. OUR PURPOSE AND I BELIEVE IT IS A COMMON PURPOSE, IS TO IMPROVE THE MILITARY CAPABILITIES OF THE ALLIANCE BY MAKING AVAILABLE TO EACH OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS A BROADER RANGE OF PRODUCTS. IN THE COURSE OF THIS, WE BELIEVE THAT WE CAN GET BETTER FORCE STRUCTURES AT LOWER COSTS WITH ENHANCED STANDARDIZATION. THAT IS A LONG WAY OF SAYING THAT WE WOULD EXPECT TO BE BUYING MORE BRITISH PRODUCTS.

Q. TO FOLLOW UP ON THAT IN SLIGHTLY BROADER TERMS, HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CAPABILITY AND THE POLITICAL WILL OF SOME MEMBERS OF NATO TO COME UP WITH THE KIND OF DEFENSE COMMITMENT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE?

A. I AM NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CAPABILITY IN THAT IF THERE IS THE WILL THE RESOURCES ARE THERE. MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATO ALLIANCE ARE SPENDING FAR LESS IN RELATION TO THEIR PRODUCTION THAN THEY WERE A DECADE AGO AND EVEN LESS IN RELATION TO 15 YEARS AGO. THE SHARES OF THE GNP DEVOTED BY MANY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE ARE 3 PER CENT, 4 PER CENT, IN THAT RANGE. THAT IS CERTAINLY NOT A HEAVY BURDEN ON THEIR ECONOMIES IF THEY ARE INTERESTED INDEED IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE SECURITY AND PEACE OF THEIR POPULA- TIONS. THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL WILL IS A DIFFICULT UNCLASSIFIED

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ONE. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT 30 YEARS OF PEACE IN WES- TERN EUROPE HAVE PROVIDED A TENDENCY TO BELIEVE THAT PEACE IS A BLESSING THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE EARNED, THAT SECURITY IS A BLESSING THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE EARNED. PUBLICS IN ALL OF THESE WESTERN SOCIETIES HAVE BEEN LULLED IN PART INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY AND THERE IS A QUESTION ABOUT THE POLITICAL WILL IN ALL OF OUR DEMOCRACIES AT THE PRESENT TIME. WE ARE GOING

THROUGH A PERIOD OF TROUBLE BUT I THINK WE WILL PULL
OUT OF IT.

Q. WHAT SORT OF INTEREST OR REACTION HAVE YOU FOUND

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SS-15 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 NEA-10 /075 W

----- 024365

O 272233Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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HERE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAEL GETTING PERSHING
MISSILES?

A. I HAVE FOUND VERY LIMITED INTEREST EXPRESSED TO
ME DIRECTLY.

Q. FROM WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY,
DO YOU THINK IT IS CAPABLE OF DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR
WARHEAD FOR THE PERSHING?

A. I THINK THAT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE QUESTION THAT
ISRAEL AMONGST A NUMBER OF NATIONS HAS THE CAPACITY TO
DEVELOP NUCLEAR WARHEADS. WHAT WE HAVE HOPED IS THAT
THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR THE

CONSEQUENCES OF A RESORT TO NUCLEAR WARFARE WOULD BE A SUFFICIENT DISINCENTIVE SO THAT FEW OF THE NATIONS THAT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO EQUIP THEMSELVES WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD DESIRE TO DO SO. ISRAEL DOES HAVE THE CAPACITY. IT HAS GIVEN IRON CLAD ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS
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INTO THE MIDDLE EAST AND I HOPE THAT WE CAN REST ON THOSE ASSURANCES.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, A SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL HAS TOLD CONGRESS THAT HE CONSIDERS THAT THE SECRET OFFERS MADE TO ISRAEL BY DR. KISSINGER OF ADVANCED WEAPONS AND ECONOMIC AID ARE BINDING EXECUTIVE AGREEMENTS. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT AND DOES THAT MEAN THAT THE US IS COMMITTED TO GIVING THE PERSHING MISSILE TO ISRAEL?

A. WELL, I'M NOT SURE OF THE PRESENT LEGAL STATUS OF THESE AGREEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE WITH ISRAEL AND WITH EGYPT. AND, I'LL HAVE TO INQUIRE INTO THAT. I THINK THAT THE INDICATION WITH RESPECT TO THE PERSHING MISSILE WAS THAT WE WOULD VIEW SYMPATHETICALLY A REQUEST. WE HAVE ALSO INDICATED THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO DRAW DOWN OUR OWN INVENTORIES AND, OF COURSE, THE PERSHING MISSILE IS OUT OF PRODUCTION. SO THAT WOULD BE AN IMPEDIMENT OF A MECHANICAL NATURE IN ADDITION TO ANY POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT EXIST.

Q. DO YOU FEEL THAT WE'RE BOUND TO THAT AGREEMENT?

A. WELL, I WOULD HAVE TO LOOK INTO WHAT WAS SAID BEFORE I COMMITTED MYSELF ON THAT SUBJECT.

Q. I BELIEVE YOU SAID THAT YOU HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON THE QUESTION OF PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH THE PERSHING MISSILE. DOES THIS HAPPEN OFTEN THAT YOU ARE NOT CONSULTED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER ON MATTERS THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE OF GREAT MILITARY IMPORTANCE?

A. I DO NOT REC ALL THAT I MADE THE STATEMENT THAT YOU ATTRIBUTE TO ME. I THINK THAT I HAVE SAID THAT I WAS INFORMED IN DUE COURSE.

Q. BUT WAS THAT BEFORE OR AFTER THE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED?

A. WELL, I THINK THAT WE DO NOT HAVE TO GO INTO THOSE MATTERS IN DETAIL. I WAS INFORMED IN DUE COURSE. I
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THINK THAT AT ANY POINT THAT THE INVENTORIES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ARE DRAWN DOWN WE WILL HAVE OUR

APPROPRIATE SAY ON THAT MATTER.

END TEXT.
RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON14950
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750336-0471
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975099/aaaaahnf.tel
Line Count: 235
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISIT OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER: TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING WITH PRESS
TAGS: OVIP, (SCHLESINGER, JAMES R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006